Friday March 28. 1845

The branch met pursuant to adjournment

Present Robert Howard esq President and all the members except Mr Baker.

Mr Collins, from the joint committee, submitted the following report and resolutions

The joint special committee, appointed to enquire into and report on the number, condition and wants of the Insane Poor in the Almshouse of Baltimore city and county, have bestowed on the subject a most careful consideration, and submit the following

Report:

Your committee have ascertained that there are in the Alms house seventy three insane paupers, viz

White men	23
White women	35
Colored men	4
Colored women	11
Total	73

Of this number twenty eight are foreigners by birth, fifty are from the city, fourteen from the country; five from the eastern shore of Maryland; one from Prince George county, one from Vermont, one from Annapolis; and one from New Orleans. Ten of the whole number are idiotic, or subject to fits; and some, particularly among the women are old and harmless, and cannot be cured.

The annual cost for the support of each insane pauper is about sixty five dollars. The nurses and attendants of these patients are selected from the temporary inmates of the house, but, although this arrangement diminishes the expense, it also greatly reduces the chances for desirable curative results. No part of the treatment of the insane has more intrinsic importance than the personal, mental and moral character of nurses and attendants — a statement that will be duly appreciated by those who contemplate the nature of insanity. How then can it be possible to treat successfully cases of pauper insanity when the nurses and attendants are selected from the establishment, with the necessary exclusion of a proper regard to qualifications.

The next subject for the investigation of your committee is the condition of our insane poor who are confined in the alms house. A careful examination has produced the most unqualified conviction

that the trustees, the physicians, and the manager have done all that circumstances would allow for the comfortable accommodation of this most unfortunate class of the inmates of the establishment. The cells although in a crowded condition, are comfortable and neatly kept: and if this most pitiable class of our citizens were placed beyond the reach of hope that any plan of medical treatment could ever restore them to the free light and air of heaven; to the enjoyments of the domestic and social relations, to the discharge of the active employments which constitute the duty and the happiness of man, to the rational worship of the Great Father of us all who smites, and who alone can heal, and who opens his ears to the humble penitent, whether he bows down in lowly adoration and confession in temples built by the hand of man, or offers his sacrifice on the alter of the great temple of nature — then your committee would have had nothing to do but to drop a sympathizing tear at the pitiable and hopeless condition of suffering humanity.

In 1840 Dr A. C. Robinson, one of the attending physicians, presented to the board of trustees an able report on the lunatic department, in which he says, "although medical skill is very important in the management of these peculiar disorders of the nervous system, it is no less necessary that, when confined, the apartments of the patients should be well warmed, lighted and ventilated; their personal comforts studiously regarded; and their morbidly sensitive minds gently checked and soothed by experienced, intelligent attendants whose "considerations of convenience", should always be subservient to the probabilities of cure. The architectural unfitness of this building for the accommodation of lunatics need not be argued. It was not originally designed for their habitation, and does not now afford the means of either secluding or classifying them, according to the intensity or peculiar features assumed by their maladies." It is a fact universally admitted in the present age, that Alms houses are so little fitted to the accommodation and cure of insanity as to be regarded as sepulchres, in which the mind is entombed almost as hopelessly as in the solitude of the grave; and therefore your committee will dwell no longer on this subject for their investigation. If any member of the City Council have any doubts on this subject, let him visit the institution, and walk, as your committee have walked,